



San Francisco Public Library

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMISSION

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of JANUARY 18, 2024

The San Francisco Public Library Commission held a regular meeting JANUARY 18, 2024, virtually and at the Koret Auditorium, Main Library.

The SFPL Commission meeting was called to order at 4:30 PM.

Commissioners Present: Wolf, Huang, Ono, Mall, Lopez and Bolander.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Peter Warfield Executive Director of Library Users Association Libraryusers2004@yahoo.com, PO Box 170544, San Francisco California 94117, said why he gives his contact information.

Glen Rogers, Landscape Architect, said he sent the Commission an article regarding the Oceanview Library and what he believes to be a better location, the IT Berkman Center, and that the Orizaba sight location is unsafe.

Michael-Vincent D'Anella-Mercanti of Friends of the San Francisco Public Library Foundation said Friends smashed their fundraising goals, brought on many new donors to support the Library and they are excited to start 2024 on that note. Friends is hosting its legacy Stong breakfast for people who have entrusted them with personal legacies. They plan to continue to host the Friends Lounge for Night of Ideas. He said they are in full support of the Strategic Planning Initiative and budget process.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2 APPROVAL OF MINUTES – DECEMBER 14, 2023

Public Comment

Peter Warfield said the minutes are deficient and continue systematically to exclude his comments about the toxicity of social media.

Commission Discussion

Motion: By Vice President **HUANG seconded** by Commissioner **LOPEZ** to approve the **DECEMBER 2023** Minutes.

Action: AYES 6-0 (Wolf, Huang, Ono, Mall, Lopez and Bolander)

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE

Gensler Senior Associate, Midori Mizuhara shared the core components of the draft Strategic Planning Process and asked for feedback from Commissioners on clarity of purpose and desired community outcomes. Mizuhara presented the draft Vision of “A Democratic, equitable and vibrant San Francisco for everyone”; draft Mission “Connect our diverse communities to learning, opportunities and each other”; and draft Values of “well-being, equity, community, collaboration and exploration.” The SPI strategic priorities are Literacy Champion, Cultural Amplifier, Community Catalyzer, Thoughtful Navigator and Resource Provider. Mizuhara said to achieve Vision, Mission, Values and Strategic Priorities the organization will undergo shifts in the service model.

Public Comment

Marciel Gamino Murphy, SFPL Meeting Room Coordinator, said she was incredibly grateful to have been recognized as an ambassador this past year and have the opportunity to participate in the Strategic Planning Process, to collectively understand the direction of the organization and the ambitious goals and objectives they aspire to achieve. Gamino said the inclusivity of everyone in this process fosters a sense of accountability among all to feel deeply connected to the organization mission.

Peter Warfield said he found the plan very problematic and the Library’s existing mission statement is a very nice one, he did not see what was wrong with free and equal access to a variety of things including joys of reading for the diverse community. The Library’s traditional role has always been the education, enlightenment, and entertainment through its collections, which is one of its strongest assets.

Commission Discussion

Vice President Pete Huang thanked the many people for all of their input and work on the Strategic Planning Initiative (SPI) this past year. He said when they started this process, he did not know the last time they updated it was 1996, and this is the right time to do this work. This plan represents so much clarity in what the Library means to patrons, and their experience with the it, the fantastic programs like giving away free books at community events and helping the recently incarcerated enter their post incarceration lives. Huang said that word ‘**connect**’ shows up so much in this plan because it acknowledges perhaps, for the first time, that this is the reality of the changing natures of libraries across the country and the Library is changing its service model to be in place, where fifteen years ago, that we would not have possible. He said he is excited about the implementation of the SPI, and what they’ll do when they fully recognize the intentionality of the plan.

Commissioner Mall said she is very respectful of the work that has been done and the work of the staff, however she is a skeptic. From her perspective, there are too many things, and she does not understand or think it is necessary to cover everything the Library does and would rather see a more focused streamlined, elevator pitch description of what the plan for the Library is. Mall said she is against some of the language like Amplified Joy and Wonder and the examples given are wonderful, but unless they have a different physical plan, especially right here, it’s very hard to implement any of these.

President Wolf said part of the challenge is to align what they have and these ambitions as part of the movement going forward how do we make that happen.

Vice President Huang said if they don't put aspirational examples, does that end up preventing people from even trying in the first place, he would love for people to try and if they don't get there fine, but it will be work and trade offs, and different ideas or modifications that don't feel like the original inspiration because they are forced to match the dream with what we have, but he would rather try than not.

Commissioner Mall said she is all for aspirational but which of these many things is the priority.

Vice President Huang responded that the SPI gives them a framework to decide amongst a list of projects.

City Librarian Michael Lambert said when they started this the aspiration was to dream big and to develop a bold vision for the future of the Library and that the framework they will then be operating under, is different but not too dissimilar, the biggest change is incorporating this new dimension of internal organizational shifts. The Library has five updated strategic priorities, and the organizational shifts are more internal.

Commissioner Ono asked if the current budget is based on the old strategic priorities and going forward will it be using these new five strategic priorities to build the future budgets and in March will they be changing the Mission and voting on that.

Lambert said that is correct and in March the Commission will vote on the updated Bylaws, which will incorporate the updated mission. Regarding facilities, the reality is they were designed with a different sensibility.

Chief Operating Officer, Maureen Singleton said the next step is a facilities master plan and to do that they need to understand what the service model is for thinking about and trying to achieve how current facilities meet or not that ability.

Mall asked for the goal for facilities changes be included in the strategic plan and if the staff signed off on the Strategic Planning Priorities.

Lambert said the next iteration of the SPI will include information about facilities planning and staff has had the opportunity, throughout, to provide feedback and they will also present this information to the Commission this spring.

Commissioner Lopez thanked the 32 Ambassadors and the team for their work and prefers the language amplify wonder because joy is subjective, it is what they hope the patrons feel but many times the Library serves as a place for non-joyful things and what comes after in the SPI is up to everybody, they need to act on and hold everyone accountable.

President Wolf said the language Spark Curiosity was strong and felt more grounded versus the joy issue.

Commissioner Bolander said this is the vision to the promised land and in 20 years they will get there, it takes a lot of effort and one of the things he likes is about trying to visualize it this way. He said the biggest challenge any strategic plan is alignment throughout the entire organization, and he likes the idea of having a big idea of what this is an elevator pitch that encapsulates and goes beyond the vision, mission, and values, brings it to life in a

way, that anyone anywhere at any level of the organization can repeat. And the language for amplifying joy and wonder, he thought was from the staff not the patron perspective.

Mall said staff safety is a priority, they can't be joyful if they are scared to death.

Lambert said this plan was co-created with staff, a bottom-up model and when he when he sees amplified Joy and Wonder, it is from a service model standpoint where every public facing staff member, every staff member, in the organization is an ambassador for the organization.

Michelle Jeffers, Chief of Community Programs and Partnership said staff needs to hear this language and it needs to be one of the foundational statements of what the organization is or it will go by the wayside, it is easy to get caught up in all the important things they do, teaching people computer skills, helping them with re-entry and giving incarcerated individuals books. Staff want them to know that when they come to the Library, they will feel joy.

President Wolf said there is a disconnect between this idea and the language on the page. There are 900 people who are employed at the San Francisco Public Library, over half of the budget is to support those people and they do have an investment to make sure the staff is joyful in their experiences, that is critical.

Commissioner Mall said all the Commissioners want people to feel satisfied and happy in their jobs.

Gensler said this was a draft, which they will refine, and they appreciated all the comments. They will go back to the drawing board on some issues and have a new iteration soon.

President Wolf thanked the Commissioners for the robust discussion and said the San Francisco Public Library is a leader, they can't forget the leadership role in their communities and around the world, if they do not take that stance of being bold, taking the leap forward and taking a few risks, they are not serving the community. Wolf said, it's providing services but also being very San Franciscan and being bold and forward thinking.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4 FY 25-26 BUDGET

Chief Financial Officer, Mike Hernandez gave an update on the FY 25 & 26 Budget, including the budget process calendar and the Mayor's budget instructions, which included the prioritization of improved public safety and street conditions, economic recovery, reduce homelessness, transform mental health services, further prepare for weakening economic outlook and no new positions. Hernandez said the Library Preservation Fund estimates \$0.4 million more than the FY25 adopted budget and expects a 2.2% increase next year. FY 25 & 26 budget priorities include Partnerships for Excellence, Literacy and Learning, Youth Engagement, Organizational Excellence, Digital Strategies and Facilities Maintenance and Infrastructure. Through January they will continue to refine the budget proposal and the Commission will approve the budget in February.

Public Comment

Peter Warfield said he hopes the Library is still following the existing budget priorities and many of the goals mentioned including joy and some of the others and about equity, free equal access, e-books, and

paper books, and e-books are not the same, they don't have the features on the flaps about the book itself and the author, the quotes in the endorsements and so on. They are not accessible to folks who have less or no access to computers.

Commission Discussion

Vice President Huang asked about the investments in the JARS patrons, the per person spending seemed high and when the issue comes up again, he would like to see more data.

Shellie Cocking, Chief of Collections said there are 800 beds not patrons in the system, so they might support three people using a bed over a month. It is a new program, four months, they are still assessing costs per month.

Commissioner Lopez asked about the grant that funds the program.

City Librarian Lambert said the grants funds 3 FT temporary staff positions.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5 CITY LIBRARIANS REPORT

Anissa Malady, Adult Engagement Coordinator, presented 2024 One City One Book selection, “The Chinese Groove”, by Kathryn Ma, and said there will be an author conversation on May 4, 2024 at the Main Library. Malady said this is the 18th One City One Book San Francisco Reads.

Shawna Sherman, African American Program Manager, African American Center outlined More Than Month: Black History Culture & Heritage programs events and authors, including Music is First! Band performance by Bryan Dyer and Sareen Poonenn Levien at the Parkside and Richmond Branches, Artist Charles Dabor Creating Collage Art event and the On the Same Page selection of On the Rooftop by Margaret Wilkinson Sexton.

Public Comment

Peter Warfield said it’s always terrific to hear about programs and what resources there are, and he wished databases were on the Agenda.

Commission Discussion

President Wolf said she and Commissioner Mall both love serving on the One City One Book, and they have started already for next year. Wolf encouraged everyone to read the book and attend the May 4th event.

Commissioner Ono said she read the Chinese Groove, it is amazing and More Than a Month, an entire year of what the Library does with African American black history month, she really enjoys the innovative programming.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6 ADJOURNMENT OF THE JANUARY 18, 2024 COMMISSION MEETING

Public Comment

Peter Warfield said the Commission should have an item on its Agenda at the end of the meeting for future agenda items that they would like to see on the agenda and asked about what is measured when the Library mentions circulation, he hears how popular e-books are but is concerned there is a thumb on the scale to make those numbers look bigger.

A Public Commenter said this was their first time ever doing this, thanked the Commission for being so open about this and being very precise in what they say and how they discuss, allowing everyone to voice their opinion and they were glad they came today.

Commission Discussion

Motion: By Commissioner **MALL** seconded by Commissioner **ONO** to adjourn the meeting.

Action: AYES 6-0 (Wolf, Huang, Ono, Mall, Lopez and Bolander)

The meeting adjourned at 6:25 PM
Margot Shaub, Commission Affairs Analyst

To access **Commission Meeting recordings** please visit: [Library Commission Meeting Recording](#)

Explanatory documents: Copies of listed explanatory documents are available as follows: (1) from the Commission Liaison Affairs Analyst/Custodian of Records, 6th floor, Main Library; (2) in the rear of Koret Auditorium immediately prior to, and during, the meeting; and (3), to the extent possible, on the Public Library Commission webpage: sfpl.org/library-commission/public-notice/agendas. Additional materials not listed as explanatory documents on this agenda, if any, that are distributed to Library Commissioners prior to or during the meeting in connection with any agenda item will be available to the public for inspection and copying in accordance with Government Code Section 54954.1 and Sunshine Ordinance Sections 67.9, 67.28(b), and 67.28(d).